

At the opening of the hearing, Chairman Mike Synar (D-Oklahoma) noted that of EPA's \$6 billion budget, funding for indoor air research receives only \$6 million, therefore making industry funding indispensable. Carpet and rug manufacturing is an \$8.5 billion-a-year industry. Although the exact amount of industry funding has yet to be determined, Synar estimated the cost to be \$10 to \$15 million over a three-year period.

CRI President Ron Van Gelderen said of Synar's estimate, "His guess is as good as any. We are willing to commit resources but not in a direction that is not validated by the scientific community." Steps toward such validation will be taken by an interagency effort to set scientific objectives for carpet research. Participating agencies would include the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, EPA, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and the National Academy of Sciences.

Sustainable Development Council

President Clinton's creation of a broad-based presidential council on sustainable development has been heralded as an opportunity for the administration to forge alliances between those concerned mainly with economic growth and those concerned with environmental protection. Clinton's council has been contrasted to former Vice President Quayle's Council on Competitiveness, which took a probusiness stance on the environment.

Industry sources welcomed the June 14 announcement as a sign of the administration's commitment to involving business interests in environmental decision-making. Some environmental sources worried, however, that unlike Quayle's Council on Competitiveness, this new council would lack influence in the development of administrative policy. Others respond that this skepticism is unwarranted for several reasons. First, Clinton's announcement came two weeks after a national conference on sustainable development which recommended the establishment of such a council, at which Vice President Gore strongly advocated strategies for sustainable development. Second, the stature of many of the members of the 25-member council virtually guarantee the council will receive the president's attention on environmental policy decisions.

Members of the council, selected to form new coalitions between traditionally divided constituencies, include Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, EPA Administrator Carol Browner, Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown, Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy, Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary,

and NAACP Executive Director Benjamin Chavis. In addition to the five cabinet members, the council is made up of eight representatives of industry, two of minorities, six of environmental groups, one from labor, one state representative, and one philanthropist.

The council will be chaired by David Buzzelli, vice president and corporate director of Environment, Health, Safety, and Public Affairs at Dow Chemical Company, and Jonathon Lash, president of the World Resources Institute. According to Lash and Buzzelli, the council's top priorities will include global climate change and global standards for worker safety and health. A plan of action by the council, noted Buzzelli, may be to "stand back from issues of the day and take a broad perspective." The council will meet four times a year for a two-year period.

Advancing Women's Health

"Why do women have poorer health outcomes?" asked Susan Blumenthal, scientific director of the Society for the Advancement of Women's Health Research at the society's 1993 scientific advisory meeting on the environment. "It may be derived from adverse impacts of environmental factors such as toxins in the atmosphere, drug exposures, or substances of abuse."

The meeting brought together leaders from medical and professional societies, academia, and government such as the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, Columbia University School of Public Health, the University of Texas/M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, EPA, and NIEHS. Consumer advocate Ralph Nader and Congressman Henry Waxman (D-California), chair of the House Subcommittee on Health and the Environment, delivered special addresses.

Participants at the meeting focused on setting a research agenda to ascertain links between health and environmental and social stressors. Discussion called for more basic research at the biochemical, cellular, and molecular levels in the context of physiological events. Menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, and menopause may influence the prediction of risks and outcomes.

"Disease is really the outcome of three factors—environment, both internal and external, hormones, and microscopic elements in the cell," said John MacLachlan, scientific director of NIEHS, which co-sponsored the meeting. "In the case of breast, cervical, and ovarian cancer, osteoporosis, endometriosis, fibroids, and sexually transmitted diseases, we're . . . still at the point where understanding the envi-

ronment's role on any of these disorders is a top priority and strategy from a research standpoint," MacLachlan said. "Diseases and dysfunctions associated with estrogens that occur later in life raise the question of earlier exposures."

Ellen Silbergeld of the Environmental Defense Fund agreed. Silbergeld said that bone is a major repository for lead that could resurface because of changes in bone physiology and hormonal regulation of mineral metabolism, particularly during menopause. "How our body handles lead is very complex," she said. "Ninety percent is absorbed into our bones." The question according to Silbergeld is what is the impact, given that lead "may be recirculated back into the body with potential toxic consequences."

Research recommendations from the meeting include educating public health officials and physicians on precise human exposure assessment; setting standard tracking techniques for pollutant exposures; establishing registries and databases for breast implants and key epidemiological reporting with complete health profiles; weighing the variable effects of fat and diet over a woman's lifetime; devising new ways to measure clinical sensitivity; and accessing findings of corporations, pharmaceutical companies, and medical specialty societies.

Interagency monitoring of contaminant-induced illness was encouraged. Participants also urged subprograms within the NIH Women's Health Initiative to study the effects of environmental toxins on cancer, osteoporosis, and endometriosis.

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